ADDRESS

of

HON. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS,

before the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF the

STATE OF GEORGIA,

22nd. February, 1866.

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Note: Milledgeville was at that time the capital of Georgia.

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HON. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS,

Before the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Feb. 22, 1866.

Gentlemen of the Senate
and House of Representatives:

I appear before you in answer to your call. This call, coming in the imposing fprm it does, and under the circumstances it does, requires a response from me. You have assigned to me a very high, a very honorable, and responsible position. This position you know I did not seek. Most willingly would I have avoided it; and nothing but an extraordinary sense of duty could have induced me to yield my own disinclinations and aversions to your wishes and judgment in the matter. For this unusual manifestation of esteem and confidence, I return you my profoundest acknowledgements of gratitude. Of one thing only can I give you my assurance, and that is if I shall be permitted to discharge the trusts thereby imposed, they will be discharged with a singleness of ~~of~~ purpose to the public good.

~~You ask my views on the existing~~ The great object with me now, is to see a restoration, if possible, of peace, prosperity, and Constitutional liberty in this once happy, but now disturbed, agitated, and distracted country. To this end, all my energies and efforts to the extent of their powers, will be devoted.

You ask my views on the existing state of affairs; our duties at the present; and the prospects of the future? This is a task from which, under other circumstances, I might very well shrink. He who ventures to speak, and to give counsel and advice in times of peril, or disaster, assumes no enviable position. Far be that rashness from me which sometimes prompts the forward to rush in

where angels might fear to tread. In responding, therefore, briefly to your enquiries, I feel, I trust, the full weight and magnitude of the subject. It involves the welfare of millions now living, and that of many more millions who are to come after us. I am also fully impressed with the consciousness of the inconceivably small effect of what I shall say, upon upon the momentous results involved in the subject itself.

It is with these feelings, I offer my mite of counsel at your requestand in the outset of the undertaking, limited as it is intended to be, to a few general ideas only well may I imitate an illustrious example in invoking aid from on High; "that I may say nothing on this occasion which may compromit the rights, the honor, the dignity, or best interests of my country." I mean specially the rights, honor, dignity, and best interests of the people of Georgia. With their sufferings, their losses, their misfortunes, their bereavements, and their present utter prostration, my heart is in deepest sympathy.

We have reached that point in our affairs, at which the great question before us is -- "To be or not to be?" -- and if to be: How? Hope, ever springing in the human breast, prompts, even under the greatest calamities and adversities, never to despair. Adversity is a severe school, a terrible crucible; both for individuals and communities. We are now in this school, this crucible, and should bear ~~shinix~~ mind that it is never negative in its action. It is always positive. It is ever decided in its effects one way or the other. It either makes better or worse. It either brings out unknown vices, or arouses dormant virtues. In morals, its tendency is to make saints or reprobates -- in politics to make heroes or desperadoes.

The first indication of its working for good, to which hope looks anxiously, is the manifestation of a full consciousness of its nature and extent, and the most promising grounds of hope for possible good from our present troubles, or of things with us getting better instead of worse, is the evident general realization, on the part of our people, of their present situation: of the evils now upon them, and of the greater ones still impending. These it is not my purpose to exaggerate if I could; that would be useless; nor to lessen or extenuate; that would be worse than useless. All fully understand and realise them. They feel them. It is well they do.

Can these evils upon us -- the absence of law; the want of protection and security of person and property, without which civilization cannot advance -- be removed? or can those greater ones which threaten our very political existence, be averted? These are the questions.

It is true we have not the control of all the remedies, even if these questions could be satisfactorily answered. Our fortunes and destinyes are not entirely in our own hands. Yet there are some things that we may, and can, and ought, in my judgment to do; from which no harm can come; and from which some good may follow, in bettering our present condition. States and communities, as well as individuals, when they have done the best they can in view of surrounding circumstances, with all the lights they have before them -- let results be what they may -- can at least enjoy the consolation -- no small recompense that -- of having performed their duty, and having a conscience void of offence before God and man. This, if no more valuable result, will, I trust, attend the doing of what I propose.

The first great duty, then, I would enjoin at this time, is

the exercise of the simple, though difficult & trying, but nevertheless indispensable quality of patience. Patience requires of those afflicted to bear and suffer with fortitude whatever ills may befall them. This is often, and especially is it the case with us now, essential for their ultimate removal by any instrumentalities whatever. We are in the condition of a man with a dislocated limb, or a broken leg, and a very bad compound fracture at that. How it became broken should not be with him a question of so much importance, as how it can be restored to health, vigor and strength. This requires of him as the highest duty to himself, to wait quietly and patiently in splints and bandages, until nature resumes her active powers -- until the vital functions perform their office. The knitting of the bones and the granulation of the flesh requires time. Perfect quiet and repose even under the severest pain, is necessary. It will not do to make too great haste to get well. An attempt to walk too soon will only make the matter worse. We must or ought now, therefore, in a similar manner to discipline ourselves to the same or like degree of patience. I know the anxiety and restlessness of the popular mind to be fully on our feet again -- to walk abroad as we once did -- to enjoy once more the free outdoor air of Heaven, with the perfect use of all our limbs. I know how trying it is to be denied representation in Congress, while we are paying our proportion of the taxes -- how annoying it is to be even partially under military rule -- and how injurious itis to the general interest and business of the country to be without Post Offices and mail communications; to say nothing of divers other matters on the long list of our present inconveniences and privations. All these, however, we must patiently bear and endure for a season. With quiet and repose we may get well -- may get once more on our feet again. One thing is certain, that bad humor, ill temper, exhibited either in restlessness or grumbling, will not hasten it.

The exercise of the right, indeed duty of fighting, but myriad-
fold inconvenience, partly of patience. Patience requires of those
afflicted to bear and suffer with fortitude whatever pile may
befall them. This is often, and especially is it the case with a
man, essential for their ultimate success by any instantaneous
measure. We are in the condition of a car with a disconnected lever,
or a broken leg, and a very too cumbrous lever at that. We will
become brown should not be with the a question of so much impor-
ance, as how it can be restored to health, rather than strength. This
requires of us as the Hebrew song to wait, to wait quietly and
patiently or opinion. Our ego, until which takes towards our active
powers -- until the vital functions perform their office. The restitution
of the bones and the gradually of the flesh requires time. Patient
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not do to pace for great haste to get well. As although to walk
can only do to the active verse. To wait or bend low, therefore,
in a spirit of humor to antipathies extremes to the mind is the edge
of patience. I know the anxiety and restlessness of the popular
mind to be fully on our feet again -- to walk upright in a sun-
light day over with the free breezes air of heaven, with the perfect
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Next to this, another great duty we owe to ourselves is the exercise of a liberal spirit of forbearance amongst ourselves.

The first step towards local or general harmony, is the banishment from our breasts of every feeling and sentiment calculated to stir the discords of the past. Nothing could be more injurious or mischievous to the future of this country, than the agitation at present, of questions that divided the people anterior to, or during the existence of the late war. On no occasion, and especially in the bestowment of office, ought such differences of opinion in the past, ever to be mentioned, either for or against any one, otherwise equally entitled to confidence. These ideas or sentiments of other times and circumstances, are not the germs from which hopeful organization can now arise. Let all differences of opinion, touching errors, or supposed errors, of the head or heart, on the part of any, in the past, growing out of these matters, be at once, in the deep ocean of oblivion, forever buried. Let there be no criminations or re-criminations on account of acts of other days. No canvassing of past conduct or motives. Great disasters are upon us and upon the whole country, and without enquiring how these originated, or at whose door the fault should be laid, let us now as common sharers of common misfortunes, on all occasions, consult only as to the best means, under the circumstances as we find them, to secure the best ends towards amelioration. Good Government is what we want. This should be the leading desire and the control(l)ing object with all; and I need not assure you, if this can be obtained, that our desolated fields, our towns and villages, and cities now in ruins, will soon -- like the Phoenix -- rise again from their ashes; and all our waste places will again, at no distant day, blossom as the rose.

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This view should also be borne in mind, that whatever differences

of opinion existed before the late fury of the war, they sprung mainly from differences as to the best means to be used, and the best lines of policy to be pursued, to secure the great controlling object of all -- which was GOOD GOVERNMENT. Whatever may be said of the loyalty or disloyalty of any, in the late most lamentable conflict of arms, I think I may venture safely to say, that there was, on the part of the great mass of the people of Georgia, and of the entire South, no disloyalty to the principles of the Constitution of the United States. To that system of representative Government; of delegated and limited power; that establishment in a new phase, on this continent, of all the essentials of England's Magna Charta, for the protection and security of life, liberty and property; with the additional recognition of the principle as a fundamental truth, that all political power resides in the people. with us it was simply a question as to where our allegiance was due in the maintenance of these principles -- which authority was paramount in the last resort -- States or Federal. As for myself, I can affirm t hat no sentiment of disloyalty to these great principles of self government, recognized and embodied in the Constitution of the United States, ever beat or throbbed in breast or heart of mine. To their maintenance my whole soul was ever enlisted, and to this end my whole life has heretofore been devoted, and will continue to be the rest of my days -- God willing. In devotion to these principles, I yield to no man living. This much I can say for myself; May I not say the same for you and for the great mass of the people of Georgia, and for the great mass of the people of the entire South? Whatever differences existed amongst us, arose from differences as to the best and surest means of securing these great ends, which was the object of all. It was with this view and this purpose Secession was tried. That has failed. Instead of bettering our condition, instead of establishing our liberties

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upon a surer foundation,we have,in the war that issued,come well nigh losing the whole of the rich inheritance with which we set out.

This is one of the sad realizations of the present. In this too, we are but illustrating the teachings of history. Wars, and civil wars especially, always menace liberty;they seldom advance it; while they usually end in its entire overthrow and destruction. Ours stopped just short of such a catastrophe. Our only alternative now is, either to give up all hope of Constitutional liberty,or to retrace our steps,and to look for its vindication and maintenance in the forums of reason and justice,instead of on the arena of arms -- in the Courts and halls of Legislation,instead of on the fields of battle.

I am frank and candid in telling you right here, that our surest hopes, in my judgment, of these ends,are in the restoration policy of the President of the United States.I have little hope for liberty -- little hope for the success of the great American experiment of self-government -- but in the success of the present efforts for the restoration of the States to their former practical relations in a common government, under the Constitution of the United States.

We are not without an encouraging example on this line in the history of the mother country -- in the history of our ancestors -- from whom we derived,in great measure, the principles to which we are so much devoted. The truest friends of liberty in England once, in 1642, abandoned the forum of reason,and appealed,as we did, to the sword,as the surest means, in their judgment, of advancing their cause. This was after they had made great progress, under the lead of Coke,Hampden, Falkland and others, in the advancement of liberal principles. Many usurpations had been checked; many of the prerogatives of the Crown had been curtailed; the Petition of Right

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I do trust and pray to Heaven that, that our great hope, in a document, or three documents, are in the restoration policy of the President of the United States.I have little hope for liberty -- little hope for the success of the great American experiment of self-government -- but in the success of the present efforts for the restoration of the states to their former practical relations in a common government, under the Constitution of the United States.

We are not without or contemporary examples or this line in our history or the Mother country -- in the history of our ancestors -- from whom we derived, in great measure, the principles to which we are so much devoted. The truest friends of liberty in England since, in fact, commenced the form of reason,and suggested,as we did, to the sword,or the surest means, in their judgment, of achieving their cause. This was after they had made great progress, under the lead of Cromwell, Hampden, Falkland and others, in the advancement of liberal principles. Many usurpations had been checked; many of the prerogatives of the Crown had been curtailed; the petition of right

had been sanctioned; Ship-money had been abandoned; Courts-Martial had been done away with; Habeas Corpus had been re-established; High Courts of Commission and Star-Chamber had been abolished; many other great abuses of power had been corrected, and other reforms established. But not satisfied with these, and not satisfied with the peaceful working of reason, to go on in its natural sphere, the denial of the Sovereignty of the Crown was pressed by the too ardent reformers upon Charles the First. All else he had yielded -- this he would not. The sword was appealed to to settle the question; a civil war was the result; great valor and courage were displayed on both sides; men of eminent virtue and patriotism fell in the sanguinary and fratricidal conflict; the King was deposed and executed; a Commonwealth proclaimed. But the end was the reduction of the people of England to a worse state of oppression than they had been in for centuries. They retraced their steps, After nearly twenty years of exhaustion and blood, and the loss of the greater portion of the liberties enjoyed by them before, they, by almost unanimous consent, called for restoration. The restoration came. Charles the Second ascended the throne, as unlimited a monarch as ever ruled the empire. Not a pledge was asked or a guarantee given, touching the concessions of the Royal prerogative, that had been exacted and obtained from his father.

The true friends of liberty, of reform and of progress in government, had become convinced that these were the offspring of peace and of enlightened reason, and not of passion nor of arms. The House of Commons and the House of Lords were henceforth the theatres of their operations, and not the fields of Newberry or Marston-Moor. The result was, that in less than thirty years, all their ancient rights and privileges, which had been lost in the civil war, with new securities, were re-established in the ever memorable settlement of 1688; which, for all practical purposes, may be looked

has been constitutional; Ship-money has been abolished; Star-Chamber has been done away with; Ecclesiastical Courts have been re-established; the Court of Commission and Star-Chamber was been abolished; many other great abuses of power has been corrected, and other reforms established. Why not satisfied with these, and not satisfied with the regular working of reason, to go on in its natural sphere, you should of the sovereignty of the Crown was pressed by the two great reformers upon Charles the first. Will also he has yielded -- this he would not. The answer was appealed to to settle the question: a civil war was the result; great relief and courage were displayed on both sides, men of eminent virtue and patriotism fell in the sanguinary and fratricidal conflict; the King was deposed and executed, a Commonwealth proclaimed. But the end was the restoration of the people of England to a worse state of oppression than they had been in for centuries. They retraced their steps, after nearly twenty years of exhaustion and blood, and the loss of the greater portion of the liberties enjoyed by them before, they, by almost unanimous consent, called for restoration. The restoration came. Charles the Second ascended the throne, as ultimate a monarch as ever ruled the empire. But a pledge was asked or a guarantee given, touching the conservation of the royal prerogative, that had been so cruelly obtained from his father.

The true friends of liberty, of reform and of progress in government, had become convinced that these were the offspring of peace and of enlightened reason, not of passion nor of arms. The Houses of Commons and the Lords of Lords were renovated, the liberties of their operations, and not the fire-fire of monarchy or Jacobin-Poor. The result was, that in less than thirty years, all their ancient rights and privileges, which had been lost in the civil war, with new securities, were re-established in the ever memorable settlement of 1688; which, for all practical purposes, may be looked

upon as a bloodless revolution. Since that time England has made still further and more signal strides in reform and progress. But not one of these has been effected by resort to arms. Catholic Emancipation was carried in Parliament, after years of argument, against the most persistent opposition, Reason and justice ultimately prevailed. So with the removal of the disability of the Jews -- So with the overthrow of the Rotten-Borough system -- so with the extension of franchise -- so with the modification of the Corn-Laws, and restrictions on Commerce, opening the way to the establishment of the principles of Free-Trade -- and so with all the other great reforms by Parliament, which have so distinguished English history for the last half century.

May we not indulge hope, even in the alternative before us now, from this great example of restoration, if we but do as the friends of liberty there did? This is my hope, my only hope. It is founded on the virtue, intelligence and patriotism of the American people. I have not lost my faith in the people, or in their capacity for self-government. But for these great essential qualities of human nature, to be brought into active and efficient exercise, for the fulfillment of patriotic hopes, it is essential that the passions of the day should subside; that the causes of these passions should not now be discussed; that the embers of the late strife should not be stirred.

Man by nature is ever prone to scan closely the errors and defects of his fellow man -- ever ready to rail at the mote in his brother's eye, without considering the beam that is in his own. This should not be. We all have our motes or beams. We are all frail; perfection is the attribute of none. Prejudice or pre-judgment should be indulged towards none. Prejudice! What wrongs, what injuries, what mischiefs, what lamentable consequences, have resulted at all times from nothing but this perversity of the intellect!

upon us a glorious revolution. Since that time England has made still further and more signal strides in reform and progress. But not one of these has been effected by resort to force. Catholic emancipation was carried in Parliament, after years of argument, against the most persistent opposition, reason and justice utterly prevailed. So with the removal of the disability of the Jews -- So with the overthrow of the Rotten-Borough system -- So with the extension of franchise -- so with the modification of the Corn-Laws, and restrictions on commerce, opening the way to the establishment of the principles of Free-Trade -- and so with all the other great reforms by Parliament, which have so distinguished English history for the last half century.

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Man by nature is ever prone to scan closely the errors and defects of his fellow man -- ever ready to call at the mote in his brother's eye, without considering the beam that is in his own. This should not be.Truth here has more of beam. We are all frail; perfection is the attribute of none. Freedom of pre-judgment should be indulged towards them. Forgiveness! That word, that injuries, that reproaches, that lamentable consequences, have resulted at all times from politics, not only particularly at the inaugural!

Of all the obstacles to the advancement of truth and human progress, in every department -- in science, in art, in government, and in religion, in all ages and climes, not one on the list is more formidable, more difficult to overcome and subdue, than this horrible distortion of the moral as well as intellectual faculties. It is a host of evil within itself. I could enjoin no greater duty upon my countrymen now, North and South, than the exercise of that degree of forbearance which would enable them to conquer their prejudices. One of the highest exhibitions of the moral sublime the world ever witnessed, was that of Daniel Webster, when in an open barouche in the streets of Boston, he proclaimed in substance, to a vast assembly of his constituents -- unwilling hearers -- that "they had conquered an uncongenial clime; they had conquered a sterile soil; they had conquered the winds and elements of the Ocean; they had conquered most of the elements of nature; but they must yet learn to conquer their prejudices"! I know of no more fitting incident or scene in the life of that wonderful man, 'Clarus et vir Fortissimus,' for perpetuating the memory of the true greatness of his character, on canvass or in marble, than a representation of him as he then and there stood and spoke! It was an exhibition of moral grandeur surpassing that of Aristides when he said, " Oh Athenians, what Themistocles recommends would be greatky to your interest, but it would be unjust"!

I say to you, and if my voice could extend throughout this vast country, over hill and dale, over mountain and valley, to hovel, hamlet and mansion, village, town and city, I would say among the first, looking to restoration of peace, prosperity and harmony in this land, is the great duty of exercising that degree of forbearance which will enable them to conquer their prejudices. Prejudices against communities as well as individuals.

And next to that, the indulgence of a Christian spirit of charity. "Judge not that ye be not judged," especially in matters growing out of the late war. Most of the wars that have scourged the world, even in the Christian era, have arisen on points of conscience, or differences as to the surest way of salvation. A strange way that to Heaven, is it not? How much disgrace to the Church, and shame to mankind, would have been avoided, if the ejaculation of each breast had been, at all times, as it should have been,

"Let not this weak, unknowing hand,
Presume thy bolts to throw;
And deal damnation round the land,
On him I deem thy foe."

How equally proper is it now, when the spirit of peace seems to be hovering over our War-stricken land, that in canvassing the conduct or motives of others during the late conflict, this great truth should be impressed upon the minds of all,

"Who made the heart? 'Tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias;
Then at the balance, let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done, we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

Of all the heaven descended virtues, that elevate & ennoble human nature, the highest, the sublimest, and the divinest is charity. By all means, then, fail not to exercise and cultivate this soul-regenerating element of fallen nature. Let it be cultivated and exercised not only amongst ourselves and towards ourselves, on all questions of motive or conduct touching the late war, but towards all mankind. Even towards

our enemies, if we have any, let the aspirations of our hearts be "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." The exercise of patience, forbearance and charity, therefore, are the three first duties I would at this time enjoin -- and of these three, the greatest is charity."

But to proceed. Another one of our present duties, is this: We should accept the issues of the war, and abide by them in good faith. This, I feel fully persuaded, it is your purpose to do, as well as that of your constituents. The people of Georgia have in Convention revoked and annulled her Ordinance of 1861, which was intended to sever her from the compact of Union of 1787. The Constitution of the United States has been reordained as the organic law of our land. Whatever differencesof opinion heretofore existed as to where our allegiance was due, during the late state of things, none for any practical purpose can exist now. Whether Georgia, by the action of her Convention of 1861, was ever rightfully out of the Union or not, there can be no question that she is now in, so far as depends upon her will and deed. The whole United States, therefore, is now without question our country, to be cherished and defended as such, by all our hearts and by all our arms.

The Constitution of the United States, and the treaties and laws made in pursuance thereof, are now acknowledged to be the paramount law in this whple country. Whoever therefore is true to these principles as now recognized, is loyal as far as that term has any legitimate use or force under our institutions. This is the only kind of loyalty and the only test of loyalty the Constitution itself requires. In any other view, everything pertaining to restoration so far as regards the great body of the people in at least eleven States of the Union, is but making a promise to the ear to be broken to the hope. All, therefore, who accept the issue of war in good

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to the hope. All, therefore, who accept the issue of our in good

faith, and come up to the test required by the Constitution, are now loyal, however they may have heretofore been.

But with this change comes a new order of things. One of the results of the war is a total change in our whole internal polity. Our former social fabric has been entirely subverted. Like those convulsions in nature which break up old incrustations, the war has wrought a new epoch in our political existence. Old things have passed away, and all things among us in this respect are new. The relation heretofore, under our old system, existing between the African and European races, no longer exists. Slavery, as it was called, or the status of the black race, their subordination to the white, upon which all our institutions rested, is abolished forever, not only in Georgia, but throughout the limits of the United States. This change should be received and accepted as an irrevocable fact. It is a bootless question now to discuss whether the new system is better for both races than the old one was or not. That may be proper matter for the philosophic and philanthropic historian, at some future time to inquire into, after the new system shall have been fully and fairly tried.

All changes of systems or proposed reforms, are but experiments and problems to be solved. Our system of self-government was an experiment at first. Perhaps as a problem it is not yet solved. Our present duty on this subject is not with the past or the future. It is with the present. The wisest and the best often err, in their judgments as to the probable workings of any new system. Let us therefore give this one, a fair and just trial, without prejudice, and with that earnestness of purpose, which always looks hopefully to success. It is an ethnological problem, on the solution of which depends, not only the best interests of both races, but it may be, the existence of one or the other, if not both.

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But with this change comes a new order of things. One of the results of the war is a total change in our xm whole internal polity. Our former social fabric has been entirely subverted. Like those convulsions in nature which break up old formations, the war has wrought a new epoch in our political existence. Old things have passed away, and all things among us in this respect are new. The relation heretofore, under our old system, existing between the African and European races, no longer exists. Slavery, as it was called, or the status of the black race, their subordination to the white, upon which all our institutions rested, is abolished forever, not only in Georgia, but throughout the limits of the United States. This change should be received and accepted as an irrevocable fact. It is a bootless question now to discuss whether the new system is better for both races than the old one was or not. That may be proper matter for the philosophic and philanthropic historian, at some future time to inquire into, after the new system shall have been fairly tried.

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This duty of giving this new system a fair and just trial, will require of you, as Legislators of the land, great changes in our former laws in regard to this large class of population. Wise and humane provisions should be made for them. It is not for me to go into detail. Suffice it to say on this occasion, that ample and full protection should be secured to them, so that they may stand equal before the law, in the possession and enjoyment of all rights of person, liberty and property. Many considerations claim this at your hands. Among these may be stated their fidelity in times past. They cultivated your fields; ministered to your personal wants and comforts; nursed and reared your children; and even in the hour of danger and peril, they were in the main, true to you and yours. To them we owe a debt of gratitude, as well as acts of kindness. This should also be done because they are poor, untutored, uninformed; many of them helpless, liable to be imposed upon, and need it. Legislation should ever look to the protection of the weak against the strong. Whatever may be said of the equality of races, or their natural capacity to become equal, no one can doubt that at this time, this race among us, is not equal, to the Caucasian. This inequality does not lessen the moral obligations on the part of the superior to the inferior, it rather increases them. From him who has much, more is required than from him who has little. The present generation of them, it is true, is far above their savage progenitors, who were at first introduced into this country, in general intelligence, virtue, and moral culture. This shows capacity for improvement. But in all the higher characteristics of mental development, they are still very far below the European type. What further advancement they may make, or to what standard they may attain, under a different system of laws every way suitable and wisely applicable to their changed condition, time alone can disclose. I speak of them as we now know them to be, having no longer the protection of a master,

This duty of giving this new system a fair and just trial, will require of you, as legislators of the land, great changes in our former laws in regard to this large class of population. Also and numerous provisions should be made for them. It is not for me to go into detail. Suffice it to say on this occasion, that ample and full protection should be secured to them, so that they may stand equal before the law, in the possession and enjoyment of all rights of person, liberty and property. Many considerations claim this at your hands. Among these may be stated their fidelity in times past. They cultivated your fields; ministered to your personal wants and comforts; nursed and reared your children; and even in the hour of danger and peril, they were in the main, true to you and yours. To them we owe a debt of gratitude, as well as acts of kindness. This would also be done because they are poor, untutored, uninformed; many of them helpless, liable to be imposed upon, and need it. Legislation should ever look to the protection of the weak against the strong. Whatever may be said of the equality of races, or their natural capacity to become equal, no one can doubt that at this time, this race among us, is not equal, to the Caucasian. This inequality does not lessen the moral obligations on the part of the superior to the inferior, it rather increases them. From him who has much, more is required than from him who has little. The present generation of them, it is true, is far above their savage progenitors, who were at first introduced into this country, in general intelligence, virtue, and moral culture. This shows capacity for improvement. But in all the higher characteristics of mental development, they are still very far below the European type. What further advancement they may make, or to what standard they may attain, under a different system of laws every way suitable and wisely applicable to their changed condition, time alone can disclose. I appeal of them as we now know them to be, having no longer the protection of a master,

or legal guardian; they now need all the protection which the shield of the law can give.

But above all, this protection should be secured because it is right and just that it should be, upon general principles. All governments in their organic structure, as well as in their administration, should have this leading object in view; the good of the governed. Protection and security to all under its jurisdiction, should be the chief end of every government. It is a melancholy truth that while this should be the chief end of all governments, most of them are used only as instruments of power, for the aggrandizement of the few, at the expense of, and by the oppression of, the many. Such are not our ideas of government, never have been and never should be. Governments according to our ideas, should look to the good of the whole, and not a part only. "The greatest good to the greatest number", is a favorite dogma with some. Some so defende our old system. But you know this was never my doctrine. The greatest good to all, without detriment or injury to any, is the true rule. Those governments only are founded upon correct principles, of reason and justice, which look to the greatest attainable advancement, improvement and progress, physically, intellectually and morally of all classes and conditions within their rightful jurisdiction. If our old system was not the best, or could not have been made the best, for both races, in this respect and upon this basis, it ought to have been abolished. This was my view of that system while it lasted, and I repeat it now that it is no more. In legislation therefore under the new system, you should look to the best interest of all classes; their protection, security, advancement and improvement, physically, intellectually and morally. All obstacles, if there be any, should be removed, which can possibly hinder or retard, the improvement of the blacks to the extent of their capacity. All

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But above all, this protection should be secured because it is right and just that it should be, upon general principles. All governments in their organic structure, as well as in their administration, should have this leading object in view; the good of the governed. Protection and security to all under its jurisdiction, should be the chief end of every government. It is a melancholy truth that while this should be the chief end of all governments, most of them are used only as instruments of power, for the aggrandisement of the few, at the expense of, and by the oppression of, the many. Such are not our ideas of government, never have been and never should be. Governments according to our ideas, should look to the good of the whole, and not a part only. "The greatest good to the greatest number", is a favorite adage with some. Some so defence our old system. But you know that was never my doctrine. The greatest good to all, without detriment or injury to any, is the true rule. Those governments only are founded upon correct principles, of reason and justice, which look to the greatest attainable advancement, improvement and happiness, physically, intellectually and morally, of all classes and conditions within their rightful jurisdiction. If our old system was not the best, or could not have been made the best, for both races, in some respect and upon this score, it ought to have been abolished. This was my view of that system while it lasted, and I repeat it now that it is no more. In legislation therefore under the new system, you should look to the best interest of all classes; their protection, security, advancement and improvement, physically, intellectually and morally. All obstacles, if there be any, should be removed, which can possibly hinder or retard the improvement of the blacks to the extent of their capacity. All

proper aid should be given to their own efforts. Channels of education should be opened up to them. Schools and the usual means of moral and intellectual training, should be encouraged amongst them. This is the dictate, not only of what is right and proper, and just in itself, but it is also the promptings of the highest considerations of interest. It is difficult to conceive a greater evil or curse, that could befall our country, stricken and distressed as it now is, than for so large a portion of its population, as this class will quite probably constitute amongst us, hereafter, to be reared in ignorance, depravity and vice. In view of such a state of things, well might the prudent, even now look to its abandonment. Let us not however indulge in such thoughts of the future. Nor let us, without an effort, say the system can not be worked. Let us not, standing still, hesitatingly ask, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" but let us rather say as Gamaliel did, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God". The most vexed questions of the age are social problems. These we have heretofore had but little to do with; we were relieved from them by our peculiar institution. Emancipation of the blacks, with its consequences, was ever considered by me with much more interest as a social question, one relating to the proper status of the different elements of society, and their relations towards each other, looking to the best interest of all, than in any other light. The pecuniary aspect of it, the considerations of labor and capital, in a <u>politico-economic</u> view, sunk into insignificance, in comparison with this. This problem, as one of the results of the war, is now upon us, presenting one of the most perplexing questions of the sort that any people ever had to deal with. Let us resolve to do the best we can with it, from all the lights we have or can get

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from any quarter. With this view, and in this connection, I take the liberty of quoting for your consideration, some remarks even from the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. I met with them some months ago while pondering on this subject, and was as much struck as surprised, with the drift of their philosophy, coming from the source they did. I give them as I find them in the New York Times where they were reported. You may be as much surprised at hearing such ideas from Mr.Beecher, as I was. But however much we may differ from him on many questions, and on many questions connected with this subject, yet all must admit him to rank amongst the master spirits of the age. And no one perhaps has contributed more by the power of his pen and voice in bringing about the present state of things, than he has. Yet, nevertheless, I commend to your serious consideration, as pertinent to my present object, what he was reported to have said, as follows:

"In our land and time facts and questions are pressed upon us, which demand Christian settlement. Settlement on this ground & doctrine. We can not escape the responsibility. Being strong and powerful, we must nurse and help and educate and foster, the weak and poor and ignorant. For my own part I cannot see how we shall escape the most terrible conflict of classes, by and bye, unless we are educated into this doctrine of duty, on the part of the superior to the inferior. We are told by zealous and fanatical individuals, that all men are equal. We know better. They are not equal. A common brotherhood teaches no such absurdity. A theory of universal physical likeness, is no more absurd than this. Now as in all times, the strong go to the top, the weak go to the bottom. It's natural, right and cant be helped. All branches are not at the top of the tree, but the top does not despise the lower; nor do they all, despise the limb or the parent trunk; and so with the body politic, there must be classes. some must be at the top and some must be at the bottom. It is difficult to

from any quarter. With this view, and in this connection, I take the liberty of asking for your consideration, some remarks even from the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. I met with them some months ago while pondering on this subject, and was as much struck as surprised, with the merit of their philosophy, coming from the source they did. I give them as I find them in the New York Times where they were reported. You may be as much surprised at hearing such ideas from Mr. Beecher, as I was. But however much we may differ from him on many questions, and on many questions connected with this subject, yet all must admit him to rank amongst the master spirits of the age. And no one perhaps has contributed more by the power of his pen and voice in bringing about the present state of things, than he has. Yet, nevertheless, I commend to your serious consideration, as pertinent to my present object, what he was reported to have said, as follows:

"In our land and time these two questions are pressed upon us, which demand Christian settlement. Settlement of this ground of doctrine We can not escape the responsibility. Being strong and powerful, we must nurse and help and educate and foster, the weak and poor and ignorant. For my own part I cannot see how we shall escape the most terrible conflict of classes, by and bye, unless we are educated into this doctrine of duty, on the part of the superior to the inferior. We are told by zealous and fanatical individuals, that all men are equal. We know better. They are not equal. A common brotherhood teaches no such absurdity. A theory of universal physical likeness, is no more absurd than this. How as in all times, the strong go to the top, the weak go to the bottom. It's natural, right and can't be helped. All branches are not at the top of the tree, but the top does not despise the lower; nor do they all despise the limb or the parent trunk; and so with the body politic, there must be classes, some must be at the top and some must be at the bottom. It is difficult to

foresee, and estimate the development of the power of classes in America. They are simply inevitable. They are here now, and will be more. If they are friendly, living at peace, loving and respecting and helping one another, all will be well. But if they are selfish, unchristian; if the old heathen feeling is to reign, each extracting all he can from his neighbor, and caring nothing for him; society will be lined by classes as by seams - like batteries, each fireing broadside after broadside, the one upon the other. If on the other hand the law of love prevails, there will be no ill-will, no envy, no disturbance. Does a child hate his father because he is chief, because he is strong and wise? On the contrary, he grows with his father's growth, and strengthens with his strength. And if in society there should be fifty grades or classes, all helping each other, there will be no trouble, but perfect satisfaction and content. This christian doctrine carried into practice, will easily settle the most troublesome of all home present questions".

What he here said of the state of things where he spoke in the State of New York, and the fearful antagonism of classes there, is much more applicable to us. Here it is true, only two great classes exist, or are likely to exist, but these are deeply marked by distinctions bearing the impress of nature. The one is now beyond all question greatly superior to the other. These classes are as distinct as races of men can be The one is of the highest type of humanity, the other of the lowest. All that he says of the duty of the superior, to protect, to aid, to encourage, and to help the inferior, I fully and cordially endorse and commend to you as quite as applicable to us and our situation, as it was to his auditors. Whether the doctrine, carried out and practiced, will settle all these most troublesome home questions with us as easily as he seemed to think it would like home questions with those whom he was addressing, I will not undertake to say. I have no hesitancy, however, in saying that the general principles announced by him are good. Let them be

forces, and estimate the development of the power of classes in America. They are simply inevitable. They are here now, and will be more. If they are friendly, living at peace, loving and respecting and helping one another, all will be well. But if they are selfish, uncharitable; if the old heathen feeling is to reign, each extracting all he can from his neighbor, and caring nothing for him; society will be lined by classes as by seams - like batteries, each firing broadside after broadside, the one upon the other. If on the other hand the law of love prevails, there will be no ill-will, no envy, no disturbance. Does a child hate his father because he is chief, because he is strong and wise? On the contrary, he grows with his father's growth, and strengthens with his strength. And if in society there should be fifty grades or classes, all helping each other, there will be no trouble, but perfect satisfaction and content. This christian doctrine carried into practice, will easily settle the most troublesome of all home present questions".

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adopted by us as far as practicable. No harm can come from it, much good may. Whether the great barrier of races which the Creator has placed between this, our inferior class and ourselves, shall prevent a success of the experiment now on trial, of a peaceful, happy and prosperous community, composed of such elements and sustaining present relations towards each other, or even a further elevation on the part of the inferior, if they prove themselves fit for it, let the future, under the dispensations of Providence, decide. We have to deal with the present. Let us do our duty now, leaving results and ultimate consequences

To that "divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will."

In all things on this subject as in all others, let our guide be the admirable motto of our State. Let our counsels be governed by Wisdom, our measures by Moderation and our principles by Justice.

So much for what I have to say on this occasion, touching our present duties on this absorbing subject, and some of our duties in reference to a restoration of peace, law and order; without which all must, sooner or later, end in utter confusion, anarchy and despotism. I have as I said I should, only glanced at some general ideas.

Now as to the future, and the prospect before us! On this branch of the subject I can add but little. You can form some ideas of my views of that from what has already been said. Would that I could say something cheergul; but that candor, which has marked all that I have said, compels me to say that to me the future is far from being bright. It is dark and impenetrable. Thick gloom curtains and closes in the horizon all around me. Thus much I can say: my only hope is in the peaceful re-establishment of good government, and its peaceful maintenance afterwards. And further, the most hopeful prospect to this end now, is the restoration of the old Union, and with

it the speedy return of fraternal feeling throughout its length and breadth. These results depend upon the people themselves - upon the people of the Norht quite as much as the people of the South - upon their virtue, intelligence and patriotism, I repeat, I have faith in the American people, in their virtue,intelligence and patriotism. But for this I should long since have despaired. - Dark and gloomy as the present hour is, I do not yet despair of free institutions. Let but the virtue, intelligence and patriotism of the people throughout the whole country be properly appealed to, aroused and brought into action, and all may yet be well. The masses, everywhere, are alike equally interested in the great object. Let old issues, old questions, old differences and old feuds,be regarded as fossils of another epoch. They belong to what may hereafter be considered the Silurian period of our history.Great,new, living questions are before us. Let it not be said of us in this day, not yet passed, of our country's greatest trial and agony, that,"there was a party for Caesar,a party for Pompey, and a party for Brutus,but no party for Rome."

But let all patriots,by whatever distinctive name heretofore styled,rally,in all elections everywhere, to the support of him, be he who he may, who bears the standard with "Constitutional Union" emblasoned on its folds. President Johnson is now in my judgment the chief great standard bearer of these principles, and in his efforts at restoration should receive the cordial support of every well wisher of his country.

In this consists,on this rests,my only hope. Should he be sustained, and the Government restored to its former functions, all the States brought back to their practical relations under the Constitution, our situation will be greatly changed from what it was before. A radical and fundamental change, as has been stated,has been made in that organic law. We shall have lost what was known as our "peculiar institution"

ir the speaker raises of traditional feeling throughout his famous address. These feelings reveal upon the people themselves - upon the people of the world quite as much as the people of the United States - upon their inner vision, intelligence and patriotism. I refer, I have faith in the American people, in their virtue, intelligence and patriotism. But for this I should some cause have despaired. - but we dismiss the present moment, I do not see despair of free institutions. Let the virtue, intelligence and patriotism of the people throughout the whole country be properly appealed to, reason and brought into union, and all may yet be well. The masses, everywhere, are deeply interested in the great object. Let the issues, the questions, the differences are the focus, be reduced to the point of another speech. They belong to what may hereafter be considered the glorious period of our history. Great, new, living questions are before us. Let it not be said of us in this day, not yet passed, of our country's greatness that we sought, that, there was a party for Congress, a party for Congress, and a party for Ohio, but no party for home.'

But let all parties, by whatever distinctive name heretofore styled, rally in all directions everywhere, to the support of him, he who he may, who bears the standard with "Constitutional Union" emblazoned on its folds. President Lincoln is now in my judgment the chief great standard bearer of these principles, and in his efforts to restoration should receive the cordial support of every well wisher of his country.

In this consists, in this rests, my only hope. Should he be overthrown and the Government restored to its former functions, all the States brought back to their practical relations under the Constitution, our situation will be greatly changed from what it was before. A radical and fundamental change, as has been stated, has been made in that organic law. We shall have lost what was known as our "peculiar institution"

which was so intertwined with the whole framework of our State body politic. We shall have lost nearly half the accumulated capital of a century. But we shall have still left all the essentials of free government, contained and embodied in the old Constitution, untouched and unimpaired as they came from the hands of our fathers. With these, even if we had to begin entirely anew, the prospect before us would be much more encouraging than the prospect was before them, when they fled from the oppressions of the old world, and sought shelter and homes in this then wilderness land. The liberties we begin with, they had to achieve. With the same energies and virtues they displayed, we have much more to cheer us than they had. with a climate unrivalled in salubrity; with a soil unsurpassed in fertility; and with products unequalled in value in the markets of the world, to say nothing of our mineral resources, we shall have much still to wed us to the good old land. With good government, the matrix from which alone spring all great human achievements, we shall lack nothing but our own proper exertions, not only to recover our former prosperity, but to attain a much higher degree of development in everything that characterises a great, free, and happy people. At least I know of no other land that the sun shines upon, that offers better prospects under the contingencies stated.

The old Union was based upon the assumption, that it was for the best interest of the people of all the States to be united as they were, each State faithfully performing to the people of the other States, all their obligations under the common compact. I always thought this assumption was founded upon broad, correct, and statesmanlike principles. I think so yet. It was only when it seemed to be impossible further to maintain it, without hazarding greater evils than would perhaps attend a sepafation, that I yielded my assent in obedience to the voice of Georgia, to try the experiment which has just resulted so disastrously to us. Indeed, during the whole

which was so interwoven with the whole framework of our State body politic. We shall have lost nearly half the accumulated capital of a country, but we shall have still left all the essentials of free government, contained and enacted in the old Constitution, unchanged and unimpaired as they came from the hands of our fathers. With these, even if we had to begin entirely anew, the prospect before us would be much more encouraging than the prospect was before them, when they fled from the oppressions of the old world, and sought shelter and homes in this then wilderness land. The liberties we begin with, they had to achieve. With the same energies and virtues they displayed, we have much more to cheer us than they had, with a climate unrivalled in salubrity; with a soil unsurpassed in fertility; and with products unequalled in value in the markets of the world, to say nothing of our mineral resources, we shall have much still to wed us to the good old land. With good government, the main trik from which alone springs all great human achievements, we shall lack nothing but our own proper exertions, not only to recover our former prosperity, but to attain a much higher degree of development in everything that characterises a great, free, and happy people. At least I know of no other land that the sun shines upon, that offers better prospects under the contingencies stated.

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lamentable conflict, it was my opinion that however the pending strife might terminate, so far as the appeal to the swprd was concerned, yet after a while, when the passions adn excitements of the day should pass away, an adjustment or arrangement would be made upon Continental principles, upon the general basis of "reciprocal advantage and mutual convenience," on which the Union was first established. My earnest desire, however, throughout, was whatever might be done, might be peacefully done; might be the result of calm, dispassionate, and enlightened reason; looking to the permanent interests and welfare of all. and now, after the severe chastisement of war, if the general sense of the whole country shall come back to the acknowledgement of the original assumption , that it is for the best interests of all the States to be so united, as I trust it will; The States still being "separate as the billows but one as the sea"; I can perceive no reason why, under such restoration, we as a whole with "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations and entangling alliance with none, "may not enter upon a new career, exciting increased wonder in the old world, by grander achievements hereafter to be made, than any heretofore attained, by the peaceful and harmonious workings of our American institutions of self government. All this is possible if the hearts of the people be right. It is my warmest wish to see it. Fondly would I indulge my fancy in gazing on such a picture of the future. With what rapture may we not suppose the spirits of our fathers would hail its opening scenes from their mansions above. Such are my hopes, resting on such contingencies. But if, instead of all this, the passions of the day shall continue to bear sway; if prejudice shall rule the hour; if a conflict of races shall arise; if ambition shall turn the scale; if the sword shall be thrown in the balance against patriotism; if the embers of the late war shall be kept a glowing until with new fuel they shall flame

lamentable conflict, it was my opinion that however the pending strife might terminate, so far as the appeal to the sword was concerned, yet after a while, when the passions and excitements of the day should pass away, an adjustment or arrangement would be made upon Constitutional principles, upon the general basis of "reciprocal advantage and mutual convenience," on which the Union was first established. My earnest, however, throughout, was whatever might be done, might be peacefully done; might be the result of calm, dispassionate, and enlightened reason; looking to the permanent interests and welfare of all. And now, after the severe chastisement of war, if the general sense of the whole country shall come back to the acknowledgement of the original assumption, that it is for the best interests of all the States to be so united, as I trust it will; the States still being "separate as the billows but one as the sea"; I can perceive no reason why, under such restoration, we can not live with peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations and entangling alliance with none. We may not enter upon a new career, exciting increased wonder in the old world, by greater achievements hereafter to be made, than any heretofore attained, by the peaceful and harmonious workings of our American institutions of self government. All this is possible if the people be right. It is my warmest wish to see it. Only would I indulge my fancy in drawing on such a picture of the future. With what rapture may we not suppose the spirits of our fathers would hail its opening scenes from their mansions above. Such are my hopes, resting on such contingencies. But if, instead of all this, the passions of the day shall continue to bear sway; if prejudice shall rule the hour; if a conflict of races shall arise; if ambition shall turn the scale; if the sword shall be thrown in the balance against patriotism; if the wheels of the late war will be kept a-jarring until with new fuel they shall flame

up again, then our present gloom is but the shadow, the penumbra of that deeper and darker eclipse, which is to totally obscure this hemishhere and blight forever the anxious anticipations and expectations of mankind! Then hereafter by some bard it may be sung,

'The Star of Hope shone brightest in the West,
The hope of Liberty, the last, the best;
That too has set, upon her darkened shore,
And Hope and Freedom light up earth no more.'

May we not all on this occasion, on this anniversary of the birth day of Washington, join in a fervent prayer to Heaven that the great Ruler of events may avert from this land, such a fall, such a fate, and such a requiem!

up again, then our present plans in our one number, are
then neither our career solitary, which is to totally obscure the
mountains and valleys forever. The sunshine and clouds, the
lightning of heaven! Then hereafter by some deed is may be found,

'The star of hope shine brightest in the dark,
The hope of liberty, the land, the bark;
That to has set, upon her darkness shore,
The hope and freedom light up with no more.'

May we not fail on this occasion, on this anniversary of the
birth day of Washington, join in a fervent prayer to Heaven
that the great Ruler of events may avert from this land, such
a fate, such a fate, and such a ruin!

Date Due

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